Kelley says controls on FBI may hamper probes of terrorists

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WASHINGTON (AP) — FBI Director Clarence Kelley said Wednesday that too much restrictive legislation over the agency's domestic intelligence activities may hamper its ability to investigate terrorist groups in the future.

Kelley, in testimony to a House Judiciary subcommittee, said he endorses FBI guidelines proposed by the Justice Department, but added that restrictions should not go too far.

"I want to emphasize that these (domestic intelligence) investigations are not undertaken for the purpose of collecting information on those who hold unpopular or controversial political views," Kelley said. "Their focus is on conduct, not ideas — conduct that involves or is likely to involve a violation of federal law."

The proposed FBI guidelines prohibit the commission or instigation by the FBI of criminal acts; the dissemination of information for the purpose of holding an individual or group up to scorn, ridicule, or disgrace; the dissemination of information anonymously or under false identity; and the incitement of violence.

Subcommittee member Rep. Herman Badillo, D-N.Y., announced at the hearing he is filing a House resolution asking for rejection of the proposed FBI guidelines on grounds they are not tough enough.

He condemned the guidelines "as so broad as to give license to exactly the same kinds of activity the FBI has carried on up until now without the benefit of guidelines."